



the wyoming game & fish department

LANDER REGION newsletter

On the Ground

Aspen restoration near South Pass



Worker beginning to cut and remove conifers at the aspen restoration site on the Shoshone National Forest.

A large habitat enhancement project kicked off last month in the South Pass area near Atlantic City. The primary focus is restoring aging aspen stands where conifers are replacing aspen through natural forest succession. By shading aspen and competing for sunlight, moisture and nutrients, conifers crowd out this important component of wildlife habitat.

Other goals of the project include reducing wildfire risk through removal of fuels, and improving shrub, riparian and stream communities to benefit wildlife.

The work is a collaborative effort between Wyoming Game and Fish Department, U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Wyo-

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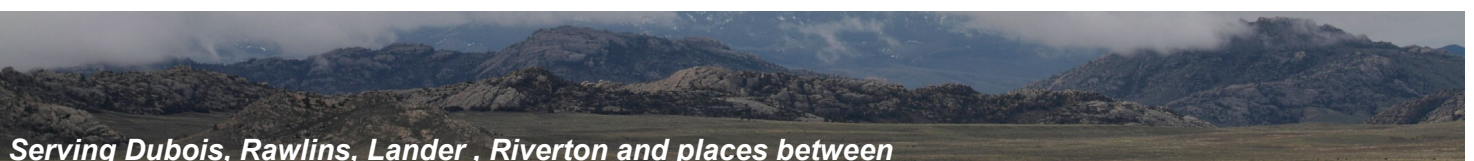
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Serving Dubois, Rawlins, Lander, Riverton and places between



Conifer encroachment at project site..

remove cut material for personal firewood use with a firewood permit, which may be obtained at the Washakie Ranger District office in Lander. All rules specified on the firewood permit still apply.

ming State Forestry Division, Fremont County Firewise, Popo Agie Conservation District, and private landowners.

Nearly \$500,000 has been secured for the project to include contributions from Wyoming Wildlife Natural Resource Trust, Mule Deer Foundation, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Wyoming Governor's Big Game License Coalition, Popo Agie Conservation District, USFS, Shoshone National Forest Resource Advisory Committee, and the Wyoming Game and Fish Habitat Trust Fund. It should take roughly three years to complete the first phase of the project on USFS land before moving onto phase two on adjacent BLM land.

Conifers are being cut and piled. The public may

Behind the Badge

Hunter education field day

Teal Joseph, Brady Frude and Linnea Sailor along with Rawlins Hunter Education Instructors Jim Ainsworth and Mike Clegg held an Internet Field Day in Rawlins. Sixteen students from around Wyoming were certified during the course. They had full participation and 100% pass rate.



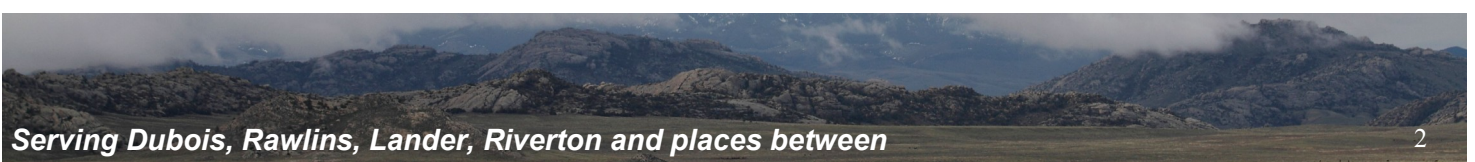
Game Warden Linnea Sailor with hunter education students.

With the Wildlife

Mule deer working group updates



At the June 9 meeting, the Lander/Green Mountain Mule Deer Working Group presented their recommendations on ATV's, Game and Fish field presence, predators, intensive management and education (all of their remaining topics) and came up with their top recommendations for each one. Their draft recommendation document will be finalized at the next meeting and then submitted to Game and Fish for consideration. This meeting will be on August 10 at 6:15pm at the Lander Regional Office, 260 Buena Vista Dr. Anyone interested is welcome and encouraged to attend this open meeting.



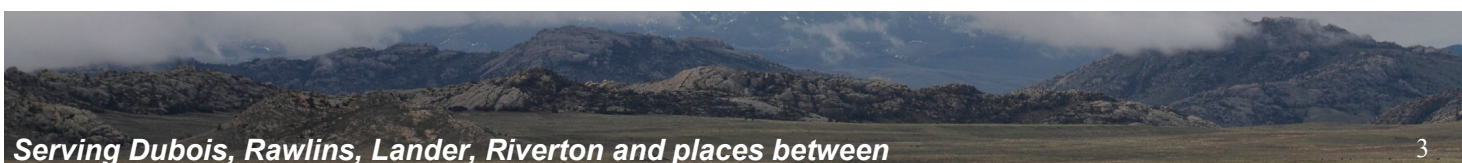


Fish Biologists Joe Deromedi and Paul Gerrity educate youth on fish life history at Worthen Meadows Reservoir.

Under the Water

Camp learns about local fish populations

Fish Biologists Paul Gerrity and Joe Deromedi and Education Specialist Rene Schell met with youth from a University of Wyoming Extension camp. They gathered at Worthen Meadows and visited with 50 youth from around the state. Paul and Joe set out three sampling nets and pulled in one net for each of the three groups taught that day. The kids learned about local fish identification, Wyoming hatcheries, fish life history, local population monitoring, fish dissection and fisheries careers. Each group also helped to weigh and measure the fish before releasing them back into Worthen Meadows Reservoir. The majority of the fish caught in nets were rainbow trout, but brook trout, greyling and lake chub also exist in the Reservoir. Fishing from shore with power bait and from boats with spinners has been successful for many anglers this year.



In the Field

Moisture



Summer storm over South Pass.

A fantastically wet and cool spring has created habitat conditions that have not been observed in almost 30 years or more in several parts of the Region. This should have a positive impact on most big game populations and combined with last summer's moisture, should help with fawn recruitment and survival. This is a very exciting situation.



Habitat flourishing near Shoshoni, Wyoming.

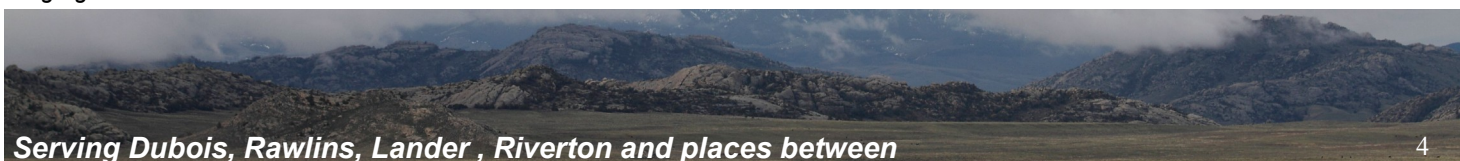
On the Leks

Statewide lek results



Sage grouse chicks

Results of the 2015 lek monitoring surveys are encouraging. Game and Fish personnel and a cadre of federal agency staff, consultants and volunteers visited over 1,600 sage-grouse leks in 2015, which was 88% of the known occupied leks. Over 35,800 male sage-grouse were observed. The 2015 average lek size of 30.8 males/lek was a 66% increase over the 18.5 observed in 2014. The proportion of active leks increased from 75% in 2014 to 82% in 2015.



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Of Interest

Water for Wildlife intern

Alex Hogan began his internship with the Game and Fish in June and has been very busy working with the staff as well and the Water for Wildlife Organization (<http://waterforwildlife.com>) who provided the funding for this internship.

Alex is a resident of Lander and with a backyard of the Wind River Mountains, enjoys hiking, fishing and hunting. This fall he will be starting his junior year at the University of Wyoming majoring in wildlife and fisheries management with a minor in rangeland ecology. This newly developed internship provides the opportunity to work with

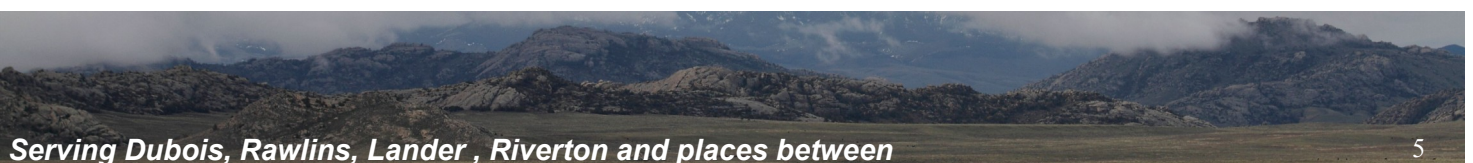
both Water for Wildlife and the Wyoming Game and Fish Department by spending two weeks at a time with each organization. Depending on the week, you can find Alex working at the Dahl museum (One Shot and Water for Wildlife) or in the field with a Game and Fish employee.



Alex Hogan, Game and Fish intern sponsored by The Water for Wildlife Organization

His duties for the summer with Water for Wildlife will be to contact landowners and agencies to create updated files for all the Water for Wildlife projects in Wyoming. These files will include updated contacts, GPS coordinates, project costs, project partners, species benefiting from the project and overall project status. Some examples of his experience with the Game and Fish so far have been working with the Fish Division crew setting nets and electro-fishing for a population study on largemouth bass, and working with the Wildlife Division to observe treatment areas to eliminate weeds and improve habitat, reviewing potential projects that may partner with Water for Wildlife programs, performing goshawk surveys and aspen regeneration surveys. Alex also spent a couple of days with the Habitat and Access crew pulling pipe, fixing fence and irrigating to improve habitat on Whiskey Mountain Wildlife Habitat Area. He even had a stint helping out the Office Managers (Shawonda, Kelsey and Tasha) by working the front counter answering phones, selling licenses, registering boats and answering numerous questions from the public.

With this diversity of work and work places, he has been learning a lot and networking with a lot of people. Alex says, "The work so far has provided me with a broad base of experience in just a few weeks and I can't wait to see what the rest of the summer has in store."



With the Bears

Busy with conflict resolution



A good example of a grizzly bear track.

In addition to research, education and flight surveys, the Large Carnivore Section has been busy with conflict resolution. Over the past month, Section personnel verified a minimum of 19 depredations of livestock, (this doesn't include one rather busy night in which a grizzly bear killed 50 chickens) and multiple instances of bears attempting to gain food through garbage. These conflicts resulted in 6 captures (3 grizzly bears, 3 black bears).

A great deal of the Section's effort goes toward reducing the potential for conflicts before they occur, such as: attractant storage, electric fencing, carcass removal and general education.

Another conflict situation last month that kept section personnel busy was monitoring a habituated roadside bear along the Beartooth Highway. Two subadult grizzly bears gained notoriety through social media when they were filmed attempting to get into a vehicle while the family was inside. Game and Fish personnel were not there when the filming occurred, but unfortunately based on the behavior of the bears, it appears that at some point in time they had been fed from a vehicle. Obviously wild bears aren't born with an ingrained instinct to go to the window of a vehicle in search of food. The bears have been hazed away from the road and Game and Fish will continue to monitor the situation.

Roadside bears have been seen over Togwotee Pass. If you are lucky enough to see one, it remains important for you to use caution, to remember these are still wild animals and to remain in your vehicle while admiring and photographing these bears.



Grizzly bear crossing the road on Togwotee Pass.

